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UNCLAS 6T

Venezuela: Perez Says Situation Normal in Caracas

PA0402115192 Caracas Radio and Television Network in Spanish
1037 GMT 4 Feb 92

[Speech by President Carlos Andres Perez from Miraflores Palace
in Caracas -- live]

[Text] Venezuelans: As I reported on my previous television appearance, I am now in my office at Miraflores Palace. The situation is quickly returning to normal. In Caracas, the group that tried to disturb order, the soldiers who violated the oath they took and violated the Republic's Constitution are already under arrest.

We still have major problems in the State of Valencia. A captain -- disobeying the authority of his superiors and dishonorably violating the oath he took -- assumed the leadership of the armored battalion. From my office at Miraflores Palace, in my capacity as his commander in chief, I order him to surrender immediately and to place himself at the disposal of the military authorities in that state.

I wish to say to the Venezuelan people that all commando units, all Venezuelan barracks, remained loyal to the Venezuelan people, the Constitution, and to the oath their members took. A group of officers, who rebelled against the Constitution and dishonored the Armed Forces uniform, dared to try to carry out this coup attempt and sought to assassinate the president of the Republic.

Venezuelans must know about this crime that was plotted and the serious consequences an event of this nature would have brought about for Venezuela. As commander in chief of the Armed Forces I again repeat my categorical order to all officers who may be displaying a subversive and rebellious attitude toward the legitimately established power to lay down their arms. The government will act within the framework of the law, but with full strictness because we are not defending the position of a government, but the fate of all Venezuelan people.

Business, cultural, and political leaders have appeared on television since the early hours of 4 February to repudiate this coup attempt and to voice their support for the legitimately established power.

I said I had the honor, but also the shame of having directly received telephone calls from the presidents of America and Europe, who voiced their indignation over what was happening in Venezuela and offered me their full support.

Lot 94 D065

Box 5

P600-Coup Attempt 1992

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Analyst: Date: 02/04/92 Time: 07:21:10

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^Military Units Launch Coup Attempt<

^Eds: UPDATES thruout with Perez, from national palace, declaring
coup defeated, details on arrests and casualties. No pickup.<

^AP Photo NY19<

^By HAROLD OLMOS=

^Associated Press Writer=

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) - Rebel troops tried to overthrow the troubled administration of President Carlos Andres Perez early today, attacking his residence and the government palace and blocking main roads into the capital.

Six hours after the attack with heavy machine guns and mortars began, Perez said the coup attempt had been defeated. He said most of the nation's 70,000-strong military had remained loyal to his democratically elected government.

Perez said rebel units led by a paratroop regiment had sought to assassinate him. He accused the coup leaders, whom he did not name, of trying to impose a "bloody dictatorship."

By dawn, loyalist soldiers were in control of the government palace and had regained control of the capital's main arteries.

But sporadic gunfire persisted in some parts of Caracas and about 300 rebels were reported still holding out in Valencia, 100 miles to the west.

In Maracaibo, the country's second-largest city and oil capital, the gubernatorial palace was back in loyalist hands after being surrounded by rebel troops, said reporters in the city 350 miles west of Caracas.

Early reports on casualties were sketchy.

Radio Caracas television said four soldiers were killed inside the government palace when, just after midnight, rebel troops tried to seize it. Other broadcast media said at least a half dozen soldiers were wounded.

Local radio reports said at least 20 officers were arrested in Maracay, about 70 miles west of Caracas, where the paratroop regiment Perez said led the coup attempt is based.

Perez appeared on national television five times after the shooting began with appeals for the support of countrymen, the fifth time from the government alace flanked by Defense Minister Gen. Fernando Ochoa.

Lot 94 D065

Box 5

P600-Coup Attempt

1992

"The traditional loyalty from the armed forces avoided this

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But the country of 19.3 million people has spent the past decade paying off a foreign debt of more than \$35 billion and watching buying power shrink.

And life has barely changed for the lower classes. Unemployment is estimated by some at about 40 percent, and those who can find work earn a minimum wage of about \$100 a month.

Today's was the third coup attempt in Venezuela in 34 years. The previous two were in the early 1960s.

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